

Meeting Minutes
Delaware Population Consortium
September 13, 2005
10:00 a.m.
Kent County Administration Building
Dover, DE

In Attendance:

Kelly Crumpley – Kent Co.	Ed Ratledge – University of Delaware
Derrick Lightfoot, AICP – City of Wilmington	Don Berry – Dept. of Education
Jennifer Leister – New Castle Co.	Dan Blevins – WILMAPCO
Mike Mahaffie – State Planning Coordination	Kevin Hickman – Dover/Kent MPO
Ric Kautz – Sussex Co.	Barbara Gladders – DHSS

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:05 a.m.

Review and approval of 7/12/05 meeting minutes

Derrick Lightfoot moved approval of the minutes of the July 12, 2005 meeting minutes. Dan Blevins seconded the motion. The motion carried, unanimously.

Review and discussion of work on the 2005 DPC projections

Ed Ratledge passed out a new data set showing control totals and components of change for the state and counties out to 2010. He then led a discussion of the data set as a way to tease out any major problems prior to going into final production of the 2005 Projections Series.

Ed noted that the employment data are not from federal sources. Instead, Ed uses age/race/sex data and the Current Population Survey at a national level to calculate a probability of employment for persons. He then applies that probability to state data to calculate an employment number.

As a check, Ed reported that he has reviewed the latest federal data on employment and finds that his estimates tend to be about 1% lower than the federal numbers.

Ed asked that county planners take a close look at the household change projections and try to determine if those estimates/projections are in line with the construction and household formation they have been seeing.

Ed noted that the migration projections for Kent County have been brought down very slightly, to reflect a leveling-off of activity in the county that is starting to show up in the various data sets used to create the projections. Kent County has seen a peak in the rate of growth in the last few years, but the newer data suggests that that peak may be leveling off.

There are also new changes to the employment structure in the military component of the Dover Air Force Base that will need to settle out over the next few years before a clear trend can be seen.

There was a discussion of the estimated/projected net commuting for New Castle County. Ed explained that that number is slightly higher than it may eventually prove to be; he pointed to a recent trend in which the county has seen a slowing in the rate of job creation.

Ed is watching the data to see if the slower job growth in New Castle County will have an effect on the rate of household formation in Southern New Castle County and Northern Kent County.

Ed also noted that the data is starting to show a shift in the age structure of the people migrating into Sussex County. In-migration in recent years had shown a trend towards older residents. He said that the in-migration group is getting somewhat younger and that some older residents are starting to migrate out of the county, as has been anticipated. As migrants age, lose partners/spouses, or decline in health, there is a tendency for them to move back to where they have family and other support.

Ed added that he is starting to see a slight increase in elder migration into Kent County. He said that the trend is very slight, but noted anyway.

There was general discussion of the difficulty posed by the prevalence of seasonal housing in Sussex County. It can be difficult to determine which new units are seasonal and which are year-round. Ed explained that he has had to depend on modeling, ratios, and where units are built to be able to estimate how many new units are seasonal.

Ed Ratledge will send the projections data set to Don Berry, who will format it for final review by members of the Consortium prior to the annual meeting.

Certificate of Occupancy Discussion

The group continued its exploration of the contents of certificates of occupancy (CO) from several governments as a potential new data source for the projections methodology.

Kelley Crumpley presented an example of the COs issued by the City of Dover. The CO includes a parcel number but has little information on the type of use or the number of units.

Kelley also reported that Kent Co. staff should be able to provide a quarterly report on household formation, by location, with only some minor process changes.

Ric Kautz gave a detailed briefing on the data he has been able to extract from the Sussex County Building permits and CO processes.

Ric noted that there is useful data, with parcel numbers that can be used to aggregate to the needed geographies but that there is uncertainty in the way use codes are kept. He said it is hard to tell if the data really reflects what was built.

Ric hopes to be able to get a “number of units” field added and populated starting the first of the year. Ed Ratledge praised the effort and said that that will be a great help.

Jennifer Leister reported on similar efforts in New Castle County. She reported that her country has similar problems. Single family townhouses and commercial uses have separate codes. Their problem comes with multi-family. It may be noted in the description, not with a unit number field.

There was a discussion of the general difficulties with using electronic assessment files, including data entry errors and lack of quality control and standardization.

Ed reminded the group that what is most important is relative change, rather than absolute numbers. To the extent that these new data sources can show relative change, by location, they will be a help.

Setting an Annual Meeting Date

Assuming the local governments give Ed a timely response on the final review draft of the projections, it should be possible to release the 2005 Projections Series in October. An Annual Meeting, therefore, has been tentatively scheduled for October 11, 2005, at 10:00 a.m., in the Kent County Administration Building.

Derrick Lightfoot moved for adjournment. Rick Kautz seconded the motion and the motion carried, unanimously.